



Georgia Legislators visit U.S./Mexico Border

Senators spend time visiting with Georgia troops securing the border



State Senator John Douglas, chairman of the Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Committee, and Sen. Nancy Schaefer recently visited with Georgia National Guard troops stationed in New Mexico, guarding the U.S./Mexico border.

The Senators met with some of the 150 Georgia troops stationed in Las Cruces, NM, as part of the U.S. intelligence gathering mission along our border with Mexico. The Georgia troops are there to assist the U.S. Border Patrol in their law enforcement duties.

“The men and women who volunteered for this are doing a tremendous job,” Sen. Douglas said after meeting with the troops. “They are taking time away from their loved ones to guard against those trying to come into this country illegally. Many of them have just returned from deployment in Iraq,

and they have willingly volunteered for this new mission. My hat is off to them.”

Sen. Douglas, Sen. Schaefer and Rep. Steve Davis accompanied Army National Guard General Larry Ross and Major James “Jim” Schroeder to New Mexico to review the troops and thank them personally for the work they are doing.

While there, Sen. Schaefer asked some of the troops what they missed most about Georgia. Without missing a beat, most of the soldiers responded they missed good ole southern food. “Sweet tea” was overwhelmingly the number one answer, followed by grits, cornbread and collard greens. The soldiers did say that one of the local restaurants in Deming, NM, tried to accommodate their Georgia transplants by attempting to make sweet tea and grits, “but it just wasn’t the same,” one soldier lamented.

While in New Mexico, the legislators were given a tour of the U.S. Border Patrol headquarters where they were able to watch cameras trained on the U.S./Mexico border in search of illegal border crossings. They also went to the border and met with Georgia troops who patrol the border and assist the Border Patrol in their duties. The U.S. troops watch around the clock for those who illegally cross the border into the country.

“It was an amazing trip,” Sen. Douglas added. “Without a doubt, we have some of the best troops in the nation right here in Georgia. I am very proud of them.”

Spotlight on... Staffers attend NCSL LINCS Conference



Members of the Senate Press Office staff and the IT Division traveled to Washington, D.C. this month to attend the National Conference of State Legislatures' 2006 LINCS/NALIT Conference. LINCS is a Professional Development Seminar for legislative communications staff, while NALIT focuses on the challenges facing IT professionals. This year's event featured seminars on dealing with decision makers, new media tools (blogs, podcasting), and visits to the White House and the U.S. Capitol. The 2006

LINCS Conference was the first joint conference with NALIT, so one of the major themes of the Conference was fostering positive professional interaction between legislative communications staff and IT professionals.

This year's LINCS Conference focused on several other themes within the world of communications. The most prominent of these themes included civic education, defending the institution and how to understand and work with new technologies like blogs, podcasts and RSS feeds. One LINCS seminar focused on how to create communications strategies to prepare for, respond to and analyze attacks on the legislature by the media, advocacy groups, bloggers, etc. Other important seminars included lectures on how to promote civic education in our day-to-day work, and how to introduce citizens to programs with which they can be involved. The Conference included a luncheon at the National Press Club, and a lunch session with former White House Internet Director Jimmy Orr. The next LINCS Conference is tentatively set for fall 2007 in Anchorage, Alaska.



Spotlight on... Staff Appreciation BBQ 2006



Many thanks go out to Secretary of the Senate Bob Ewing for hosting the first annual "Backyard BBQ Bash" at his home on Saturday, October 14. Bob was generous enough to open his doors to the hard-working Senate staff, while former Senate employee, Chef Jack Holt introduced us all to his delicious recipes for smoked ribs and chicken quarters.

Senate staff members, spouses and friends gathered around the backyard fire pit and enjoyed an evening complete with barbecue chicken, ribs, baked beans and all the fixings (including some exceptional

desserts), while a cover band provided some great entertainment. Many thanks also go to everyone who contributed to this successful event, which we hope will become a new tradition for the Senate and its staff in the years to come.

Employee Spotlight on... Judy LaClair

What is your current job and/or assignments?

I am the legislative assistant to Senator Dan Weber and Senator Preston Smith, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. My main responsibility is, of course, to be available to both of my Senators to handle all of their administrative needs. During the interim, I mainly deal with constituent services. I also handle their calls, emails and other communications like letters and memos. When we are in session, I am also the secretary for the Judiciary Committee, which I like to refer to as the “workhorse committee.” I handle all Committee memos, such as meeting announcements, agendas and schedule changes. I am responsible for reporting out the Committee bills for Judiciary, and I am accountable for all of the Committee minutes as well.

How did you end up at the General Assembly?

A friend of mine and I were working for the Fulton County Juvenile Court, and then she got a job working for the House of Representatives. I told her that if she heard of any new openings in the General Assembly, I might be interested. My friend then moved over and began working on the Senate side, and she heard that the Senate was going to hire five new secretaries. I submitted a resume for one of those positions, and I was hired. When I started working for the Senate, there were only 10 Republicans and two women in the Senate. Obviously, things have changed a bit during my years with the General Assembly. In my capacity, I've worked for Senators Nathan Dean, Chuck Clay, Bud Stumbaugh, Sallie Newbill, Preston Smith and others. I have also worked for the Department of Education and the Georgia Republican Party.



Tell me a little about your background. Birthplace, brothers and sisters, etc.

I was born in Albany, and my father was in the U.S. Army, so we moved around a great deal in my youth, including stints in Europe. Eventually, my father was stationed in Atlanta, so we settled back into Georgia. My immediate family mainly resides in South Georgia (Sylvester and Albany), and I now live just up the road in Auburn. I have a brother named Jesse, and two daughters – Amanda and Courtney. I am also the proud grandmother of five boys, ranging in age from five to 11 years old. I have two rescued Chihuahuas, Patty and Penny, and a rescued cat named Priscilla, who's bigger than both the dogs.

Tell us about your hobbies and/or what you enjoy doing away from work...

I enjoy working in my yard, whether it's basic maintenance like mowing and trimming, or more advanced work like planting and landscaping. I also love traveling to Georgia's lakes and the North Georgia mountains to relax. One of my favorite things to do is to spend quality time with my five grandchildren and my family. I attend their youth football games often, and I like to help out as much as possible with their teams. When my daughters were younger, I coached their tee-ball team, so being able to enjoy my grandsons' football games is a lot of fun for me.

The General Assembly can be an exciting place to work. What are some of the aspects of your position that you enjoy the most?

I like being able to help resolve constituents' problems on behalf of my Senators. I think that is one of the most rewarding aspects of my job. I've greatly enjoyed working with different Senators over the years, like Sen. Chuck Clay, Sen. Preston Smith, Sen. Sallie Newbill and Sen. Dan Weber. Also, I worked in a Capitol office for several years, and I have very fond memories of working over there. I have never lost that feeling of awe that I get every time that I am in the Capitol Rotunda. So much history has happened in that building, and there is so much history being made in the General Assembly every day.

Senate Budget's Spotlight on... Monthly numbers



The net revenue collected by the Department of Revenue for September 2006 (FY 07) was \$1,556,396,000.

This is an increase of 6.5 percent when compared to the revenue collected in September 2005 (FY 06), which was \$1,460,918,000. The percentage increase year-to-date for FY 07 compared to FY 06 is 6.5 percent.

Senate Spotlight on . . . October Birthdays



HAPPY BIRTHDAY to . . .



*Senator **Bill Hamrick***

*Senator **Bill Heath***

***Jeff Walker**- Senate Research Office*

***Lynn Whitten**- Legislative Counsel*

***Brian Johnson**- Senate Research Office*

***Annette Culpepper**- Legislative Counsel*

***Robyn Underwood**- Fiscal Office*

***Jason Fernandes**- Senate Budget Office*

***Darryl Jacobs**- Fiscal Office*

***Brian Hurst**- IT Division*

October 6th

October 20th

October 7th

October 1st

October 31st

October 8th

October 29th

October 31st

October 13th

October 21st

Happy Belated Birthday to...

***Shawn Marie Story**- Legislative Counsel*

***Tyna Duckett**- Senate Photographer*

September 25th

August 31st

Remember Daylight Savings ends on October 29!!!



Please remember to set your watches, clocks and dreaded clock radios back one hour on Saturday October 29, 2006. Also, the Senate Press Office would like to wish a Happy Halloween to all Senators, staff members and their families.

The Senate Spotlight is a product of the Senate Press Office. If you have a suggestion, a person you would like to nominate for the Employee Spotlight or a Senate-related article to contribute, please contact our office at 404.656.0028.